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THE GENERIC NAME OF THE WATER-WEED.

THE first generic name applied to our common Water-weed or Ditch-moss was *Elodea*, published by Michaux (*Fl. Bor. Am. I: 20. 1803*), who gave a description accompanied by a figure of the North American plant specifically designated by him *Canadensis*. This name was unavailable on account of the prior publication of *Elodes* Adans. (*Fam. Pl. 2: 444. 1763*), the same word with a different spelling. Adanson's genus was based on *Hypericum Ægypticum* Linn.; it has been accepted by Payer (*Organog. 8, pl. I.*). *Hypericum Ægypticum* was also made by Spach the type of the genus *Triadenia* (*Ann. Sci. Nat. II. 5: 172*) as *T. microphylla*. It is noteworthy that Spach in the paper above cited credited Adanson with the name *Elodea* and founded a new genus *Elodes* in addition, thus complicating the synonymy of these Hypericaceæ in an extraordinary manner.

Elodea Michx., being thus clearly untenable, authors have at different times proposed no less than six generic names for the Water-weeds. In seeking for the oldest of these, Morong (*Mem. Torr. Club, 5: 27*) has recently accepted *Udora* Nutt. (*Gen. 2: 242. 1818*), but *Philotria* Raf. (*Am. Month. Mag. 2: 175. Jan. 1818*) was published a few months earlier, and appears to be the first available for these plants. The North American species is *Philotria Canadensis*=*Elodea Canadensis* Michx.

N. L. BRITTON.

*NOTES ON THE PROGRESS OF ASTRONOMY DURING THE YEAR 1894.***MINOR PLANETS.*

TWENTY-THREE new planets were discovered. Permanent numbers have been assigned from 379 to 390, both inclusive. Eleven have, as yet, been unnumbered, as

* Based mainly upon the *Annual Report of the Royal Astronomical Society of London*. February, 1895. Prepared at the request of the responsible editor.

the investigations in regard to their orbits are not sufficiently complete.* The discoverers were as follows: Charlois at Nice 11, Courty at Bordeaux 2, Wilson at Northfield, Minn., 1, Wolf at Heidelberg 6, Bi-gourdan at Paris 1, Borely at Marseilles 1, Roberts at Crowborough 1.

Minor planets are now picked up so rapidly by photography and other methods that, to avoid confusion in the numeration, Prof. Kreuger, of Kiel, assigns a provisional rotation (A, B, C, etc., BA, BB, BC, etc.), arranged in order of their announcement to the 'Telegraphische Central-Stelle.' The final number is assigned by Prof. Tietzen, Director of the Rechen-Institut in Berlin. Numbers are assigned to those planets only for which sufficient observations are available for a determination of the orbits. Names are given by the discoverers.

Planet BE discovered November 1, 1894, by Wolf, is unique, having the smallest perihelion distance of all the minor planets, except possibly No. 323, Brucia, which was named after Miss Bruce of New York City, on account of her generous contribution to astronomical work. The least distance of BE from the earth and Mars are about 63 and 21 millions of miles. It seems to be well adapted for determining Solar Parallax.

Prof. E. E. Barnard measured, during the year, the diameters of Ceres, Pallas and Vesta with the great telescope of the Lick Observatory and obtained the results as follows: Ceres, 520 miles; Pallas, 304 miles; Vesta, 241 miles. These planets are the largest of the family.

COMETS.

Five comets were discovered.

(a) Denning, of England, picked up the first on March 26, 1894.

Investigations seem to show that this

* Numbers have since been assigned up to and including 401.